

8.

# A SERMON

Preached before Their  
**SACRED MAJESTIES**

T H E

# King and Queen, A N D **QUEEN DOWAGER:**

I N

Their Majesties Chappel at S. *F*ames's,  
On the Feast of the Holy Patriarch

# St. BENNET.

*Anno 1685. Old Style.*

---

By Fa. *John Croffe*, of the Holy Order of S. *Francis*. D.D.

---

Published by His Majesties Command.

*L O N D O N,*  
Printed by *Nath. Thompson* at the Entrance into the  
Old-Spring-Garden, near Charing-Cross. MDCLXXXVII.



---

A  
**S E R M O N**  
 Preach'd before the  
**KING and QUEEN, &c.**  
 On the Feast of the Holy Patriarch  
**St. BENNET.**

---

*Lament. Chap. III. Vers. 28.*

*Sedebit solitarius, & tacebit, quia levavit su-  
per se.*

*He shall sit solitary, and shall be silent, because  
he hath raised Himself, above himself.*

1. **T**HE Holy Prophet *Jeremy*, in these words of my Text, (*Most Sacred Majesties,*) passeth from a mournful Elegy, to a Song of Joy ; from Eyes full of Tears, to Lips flowing with Comforts ; Hi-

therto, he had wept over the Ruins of a Ransack't City ; *Hierusalem*, the Glory of the East, now laid in Ashes ; he had bewail'd the Chains of the Captive *Israelites* ; their crying Sins, as the cause ; and God's avenging Judgements, by the severe hand of an insulting Enemy, as the Minister of Justice, *Nabucodonosor*, *The Rod of God's Indignation*, Lamen. 2. 1. But now he changeth his Tears of Sorrow, into Streams of Consolation, ravish'd into an Extasie of Divine Contemplation, wherein he foresees the Everlasting delivery of the true *Israelites*, us Christians, from the slavery of Sin, through the powerful Grace of Jesus, our Divine Mediator ; who will sanctifie his People from their Crimes, free them from the Tyranny of Satan, triumph over Rebellious Passions, and reveal the delicious Mysteries of his Love, in the silent, and innocent Retreats of holy Solitude : and therein will lift up Purified, and Heavenly Enflamed Souls, to ineffable Joy, even to a likeness and Society with God, in his communicable Perfections, and Comforts : *He shall sit solitary*, saith the Prophet, *and shall be silent*, because he hath raised *Himself*, above *Himself*.

2. For all the Glorious Saints are the Images  
of God ; their Lives are Spiritual, as God is ;  
their

their Souls are all on fire, with Divine *Love*, which is the *Life* of God ; their motions are above the Sphear of Earthly Creatures, towards Heaven, the Palace of Gods Glory ; and their operations are all Divine ; because God only, is the *Object*, the *End*, and the whole *Motive* of all the Sacred Transports of their supernatura-lized Spirits ; they being ever busied, in heark-nning to the whispers of their Heavenly Spouse, preparing for the illapses of Divine Grace, and imitating the perfections of God, through a holy thirst, to be eternally Transfigured into the likeness of God's Glory, that *Blessed part-nership with God in his Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4.

*Consortes Di-vinae Naturee,*  
2 Pet. 1. 4.

Not by an identity with God, in his Essence ; or by a consubstistence therewith, in his divine Person ; but by a most ravishing Communica-tion in his Holines, and Glory ; *We shall be Adoptatus, non aequalis factus Divinitati, sed confocians a-ternitati*, Aug. Tr. 51. in Joan. Which likeness is communicable to Creatures, without damage to the Creator ; For *His Bounty is so great*, ( saith the Master of Sentences, ) *that being infinitely Good, he would have us partakers of that felicity, wherewith he himself is Eternally Blessed* ; *that felicity, which he saw, might be ours* ; *quoniam videt, & commun-*

*et si posse, &  
minui omnino  
non posse, Mag.  
2. d. 1. c.*

*Pelagus omnis  
perfectionis,  
Dam. 1. 1. c. 4.*

*Dedit potestas-  
tem filios Dei  
fieri, quis qui ex  
Deo nati sunt,  
Joan. 1. 12.*

*Non astrictus sua  
boastieundinis fo-  
litarium mag-  
nitudinem,  
Cyp. Serm. de  
Ascens.*

*Spirarulum vi-  
tae, Gen. 2. 7.*

*Lumen vulpis  
tm, Psal. 4. 7.*

communicated, but could not be diminished, 2. d. 1. c. For as the Ocean is ever full, though it flows through the Channels of the Earth, moistens its Banks, and Meadows ; and by secret Springs, and visible Showers, gives plenty and pastime to the World : So God, infinitely rich in his Holiness and Glory, and as S. Damascen speaks, *A Sea of boundless Perfections*, l. 1. c. 4. though ever an Abyss of Happiness, doth still, by an effusion of his Sacred Lights and Flames, communicate to Seraphick Souls, Heavenly Motions, and Operations, till he lifts them up, to a most wonderful, and ineffable filiation, or likeness with God, *The proper Badge and Inheritance of those, who by Grace, are born of God*, according to S. John 1. 12. And therefore S. Cyprian, with good reason, admires *The Amplitude of the Divine Liberality, which allows no restraint to the overflowing of his immense Beatitude*, Cypr. Serm. de Ascens.

3. Man's Soul too, is naturally Ambitious of this holy Union with God, and happy transport into his felicity ; for by Nature she derives her Being from God ; *a Breath of the Divine Life*, Gen. c. 2. v. 7 : She is stamp'd with God's Image, *Seal'd with a Ray of Divine Light*, Psal. 4. 7. Dives, by the strength of her Spirit, into the

the perfections of the Nature, and Properties  
of God, even *The depths of Divinity*, 1 Cor. 2.

10. And is empty, and unquiet ; unless, Filled  
with God, and divine Notions, and Affections,

Aug: Man. c. 29. So that even in her Natural  
Being, she hath some marks of a Heavenly  
Creature. But then, if further considered, as

she is raised to supernatural Excellencies, by  
Predestination, to Glory ; by Regeneration; to

be a Mystical Member of Christ ; and by Com-  
munion of Sacraments, to be sprinkled with

the rich dew of Deifying Grace, which S. John  
calls, the *Seed, or Nursery of the Divinty*, 1 Joan.

3. 9. taken forth the Bosom of a merciful God,  
and sown in the Fields of Mans Soul ; that by

due Use, we may grow up, into somewhat Di-  
vine ; which the Angel of the Schools, calls,

*Good Works, Merits, and Eternal Glory*, S. Th.

p. 1. q. 62. a 3. If, (I say,) the Soul be thus  
considered, this Thought alone, were enough

to charm the whole World, to a contempt of  
all Earthly Delights and Glory, and to a rest-  
less languishing after those above : For what

proportion is there, between a Soul, every way  
Heavenly ; and this Thorny Earth ; where she

is only a Guest and Pilgrim ? And whither  
should Man's Spirit move, with greatest Vi-

gour,

*Spiritus omnia  
scrutatur, etians  
profunda Dei.  
1 Cor. 2. 10.*

*Hac est vera  
cordis requies,  
cum totum, in  
amorem Dei,  
per desiderium  
figitur ; nec  
quicquid aliud  
apparet, sed in  
eo quod tener,  
felici quidam  
dulcedine dele-  
bitur, delectan-  
do jucundatur,  
Aug. Man.  
c. 29. n. 1.*

*Semen Dei,  
1 Joan. 3. 9.*

gour, but to the only Centre of all true, and pure Love, the Bosom of the Divinity, whence she issued ? *Love is the strongest Byas of the Soul*, if she be filled with Divine : Ah ! how sweetly, how swiftly will she soar up to God, her delicious Centre ? And cry with S. Aug.

*Amor meus, pondus meum :*

4. But alas, Beloved Christians ! There is another heavy Weight, under which Man's Spirit groans, his Concupiscence ; It sinks down the thinking Soul, says Solomon, Sap. 9. 15. Thinking ! On what ? On things below, Vanities, Wealth, Pleasures : It sinks down ! Whither ? Ah ! to the enjoyment, of whatever can ravish our Senses, with present delights ; even to the forfeiting of those, which are Pure and Eternal. Hence, that dreadful conflict within Man,

of which S. Paul speaks not, without Tears and Horrour ; *The Flesh wars against the Spirit* ; *An unhappy Man ! Who will free me from this Bondage ? Why free Thee, O great Apostle ? Because no abiding in Sodom, without danger, of being infected with her Crimes, and consumed in her Flames* How many Illustrious, Beautiful, Heroical Souls, have been poisoned with her Apples ? Perished in her Fields ? *Volutabar in cæno ejus, tanquam in Cinnamoris.* crys S. Aug. 2.

Conf. 3.

5. Our

*Amor meus, pondus meum ; et feror, quocunq;*  
feror, Aug. 11.  
Civ. 28.

*Terrena habi-*  
*tatio deprimit*  
*sensum multa*  
*cogitantem, Sap.*  
9. 15.

*Caro concupi-*  
*cit adversus spi-*  
*rituum, Gal. 5.*

17.  
*Infelix homo !*  
*quis me libera-*  
*bit à corpore*  
*mortis hujus ?*  
Rom. 7. 24.

5. Our Glorious Patriarch, S. *Bennet*, the motive of this days Triumph, through the Universal Church ; and the happy cause of this Royal, and Magnificent Assembly ; we All being his Children, as well as his Admirers ; Our glorious Saint, (I say,) saw the danger of these Flames, and flies to the Mountains : He fore-saw, that no security was amidst the charms of an easie and yielding Sensuality ; and at the first touch of the Heavenly Fire, enflamed with Sacred Vows of a transcendant Life, he bids defiance to the World, tramples over his own Passions, and secures his Soul to God, whose Right it is, by great and innumerable Titles. He flies to the *Desert*, thus he vanishes the World, and its Vanities ; In the *Desert* he studieth the Life of *Jesus* ; thus he Triumphs over Himself, and his Concupiscences. He heard the delicious Voice of *Jesus*, inviting to perfection, and prescribing the Means to acquire it ; *Wilt thou be perfect?* saith our Divine Espouse ; *Renounce all thou hast*, Marc. 10. 21. Not enough : *Deny thy self*, saith *Jesus*, Matt. 16. 24. *Wilt thou be secure!* a step higher ; *Fly to the Mountains*, Matt. 24. 16. These are those powerful Charms of the Gospel of Love, which have unpeopled Cities, to fill the Solitudes with Saints, have

*Quaeunque habes,  
vende, Mar. 10.  
21. Abnega  
semetipsum,  
Matt. 16. 24.  
Fugiant a domo-  
tes, ib. 24. 16.*

have wrested rich Spoils from the power of Satan, to make them Captives of Grace ; and by their gentle attracts, have enticed Princes from the delights of their Thrones and Diadems, to become the humble Imitators of a Crucified Jesus, *The Essays of the Power of Grace*, and the Glorious Copies of Christian Perfection : These Beloved Christians, these were those stately Columns of Sanctity, whereon our great Patriarch, built up that Illustrious Fabrick of Solitary Perfection ; out of whose Sacred Retreats have issued forth, Those great Heroes of the Catholick Church ; who by their eminent Learning, Piety, and Example, have fill'd the World with Christians, the Deserts with Saints, the Church with holy Prelates, and Palaces with Godly Kings and Princes ; who by their admirable Zeal and Munificence, have fortify'd their Kingdoms with Religious Cloysters, to serve as Bastions to God's City, against the Armies of sinful Passions ; for the safeguard of Refuged Sinners, for the propagation of Saints, and for the Eternizeing the Victories, Triumphs, and Trophies of Jesus.

6. O Divine Jesus, being exalted on the Cross, thou drawest all hearts unto Thee, by the Lights of thy Revelations, by the Flames of thy Grace,

Grace, and by the burning Lamps of thy Sacred Examples ; how powerfully hast thou Drawn our great Patriarch ! And by Him, those Legions of his holy Disciples, the worthy Imitators of his sublime Perfections. Oh ! that we also, *Beloved Christians*, who by their Doctrine, are the Disciples of *Jesus*; and by their Sacred Ministry, are Consecrated to the Divine Uses of God's Heavenly Temple ; may also, by their glorious Examples, be the true Children of these great Saints, and may say with holy *Tobie*, *We are the Children of God's Holy Ones*, Tob. 2. 18. And thou, O Divine Mother of *Jesus*, as thou hast given Him unto Us, a Master of all Heavenly Perfection : So also vouchsafe to plead for Us, at the Throne of his Mercy, That the Illustrious Life of *Jesus* may be the *Guide*, *Object*, and *Motive* of our true Beatitude. *Ave Maria.*

*Filiis Sacerdotum  
sumus, Tob. 2.  
18.*

7. All Vertues issue forth the same Fountain, the Bosom of the *Divinity*, through the Grace of *Jesus*, our *Mediatour* ; therefore All are United ; and in their Heroick State, are linked together, in their Operations, in the Souls of the *Just*. Yet all Vertues, in each, are not of an equal Perfection ; all the Angels shine with glory, but all are not of an equal

*Stella à Stella  
differt in Clas-  
sitate, 1 Cor.  
15. 41.*

*Divisiones sunt  
gratiarum, mi-  
nistrorum,  
operistarum,  
1 Cor. 12. 4. 5,  
6. *Mansiones  
multæ sunt,* Jo-  
14. 2. *Qui  
parcet seminat,*  
*parcet metet,*  
2 Cor. 9. 6.*

*Christo confix-  
us sum Cruci,*  
Gal. 2. 19.

*Consepulti su-  
mus cum Chri-  
sto, Rom. 6. 4.*

*Confurrexisti  
sum Christo,*  
Col. 3. 1.

Lustre and Beauty ; for they differ as Stars, which have their different Magnitude and Splendour, 1 Cor. 15. 41. All the glorious Saints burn with Divine Love, but not with the like Flames ; for There is a division of Graces, 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. In Heaven above, there be Divers Mansions of Glory, Joan. 14. 2. And here on Earth, there be divers Merits of that Glory, 2 Cor. 9. 6. Wherefore, as in the Order of Nature, all the Elements are United in each Mixt Body, and yet in Each, one Element is predominant over the others : So also, in the Order of Grace, All Perfections meet in every Saint, yet in each, One Perfection is more Eminent and Adorable. In our Seraphical Patriarch S. Francis, all admire a most stupendious Contempt of the Grandeur and Glory of the World : He was a Prodigy of Evangelical Poverty, and his Motto is, *With Christ I am Crucified*, Gal. 2. 19. In the Great S. Bruno, we admire an almost incredible Rigour of Abstinence and Fasting ; He was a Prodigy of Mortification, and his Character is, *I am buried with Christ*, Rom. 6. 4. In the glorious S. Dominick, we admire a most passionate Zeal for the Conversion of Sinners ; He was a Prodigy of Piety, and his Emblem is, *I am risen with Christ*, Colos. 3. 1. But in this our

our Illustrious and Glorious Patriarch, S. *Bennet*, all Vertues had their Meridian Altitude ; Yet he was in a most sublime Manner, a Prodigy of Solitude and Contemplation. *First*, by *Solitude* he shakes off the World without, and shakes out his Concupiscences from within ; and thus he arrives to a profound spiritual Silence, of all Creatures abroad, and of all Passions at home. *Secondly*, by *Contemplation*, he fills his purified Mind, with holy Notions of Heavenly Perfections ; and his flaming Soul, with transporting Affections, towards Eternal Comforts ; and his Motto is, *I ascended with Christ*, Amos 9. 6. This Priviledge was Proclaimed, as the proper Style of our glorious Patriarch, by the Voice of an Angel, at his glorious Inauguration, when his Illustrious Soul, cloath'd with a Vest of Light, was conducted through a Lane of Stars, amidst the loud acclamations of Heavenly Citizens, *This is the Way, by which the great Servant of God, Bennet, entered the Kingdom of Glory.* I should be infinite, did I attempt to describe All the Drops of this Sea of Perfection, All the Beams of this Sun of Sanctity, All the Stars of this Living Heaven ; I will confine my Discourse, to his *Solitude*, and *Contemplation*, to which all Vertues were subservient,

*Edificat in ea-  
lo ascensionem.  
Amos 9. 6.*

*Hec est Via, quæ  
dilectus Domini  
Benedictus in  
celum ascendit.  
S. Greg. in Vi-  
ta S. Bened.*

vient, as Dispositions, Companions, or Achievements of this stupendious *Master-Piece* of Evangelical Perfection, the Illustrious, the Holy, the Glorious Patriarch S. Bennet: Wherefore, to fix my Matter, and your favourable Attention.

*The Division.*

8. *First*, I shall shew, That S. Bennet chose a solitary Life, because *Solitude* is the safeguard of Perfection; for as much as it affords Means to *Crucifie* the World, without; and to *Bury* our Passions, within; And thus frees the Wings of *Contemplation*, from the entanglements of Creatures, and distractions of clamorous *Cupiscences*: Therefore *He will sit solitary, and will be silent.*

*Secondly*, I shall shew, That he chose a *Contemplative Life*, because *Contemplation* gives Us a relish of the delights of *Heaven*; forasmuch as 'tis an effectual Means of the *Rising*, and *Ascent* of the Soul to *God*, and a most delicious Communication with Him, by Divine Irradiations, Heats, Embraces, and Meltings of the Soul into *God* by Love; *Because He hath raised Himself, above Himself.*

9. Adam was framed of the Earth, therefore his inclinations and Actions were Earthly, 1 Cor. 15. 47. Such also are all those of the Children of Adam, ibid. vers. 48. But Jesus Christ, our Head and Glory, descended from Heaven, therefore all his Inspirations, and Allurements are Heavenly, and such should be all the Motions and Operations of Christians. Our Obligations are many and weighty; We are bought with the inestimable price of the Blood of Jesus, 1 Cor. 6. 20. We are sanctified and sealed with the Name of Jesus, ibid. v. 11. and Eph. 1. 13. And through his Grace and Unction, we are Enrolled in the Book of Life; properly the Book of Jesus, Apoc. 21. 27. From these premisses, the Demonstration is clear; Therefore we may not live, according to the Passion of our Earthly Members, but by the Rules of our Heavenly Master, a new Life, agreeable to the Image of Jesus; and its true Copies, the Lives of the Saints. The holy Apostle warns Us, of this pressing Duty; *Do not fashion your selves to the Maxims of this World*, Rom. 12. 2. We may not, upon any account: Its Vanity, its Prosperity, its Pleasures, infallibly will defile the Soul, will cancel our claims to Heaven, and will bring everlasting Perdition upon Us.

The

Part I.  
*Primus homo de terra, terrenus:  
 qualis terrenus,  
 tales terreni.*  
 1 Cor. 15. 47,  
 48.

*Empti etis pre-  
 tio magna.  
 1 Cor. 6. 20.  
 Iustificati etis  
 in nomine ejus.  
 v. 11. In quo  
 credentes signa-  
 ti estis, Eph. 1.  
 13. In libro vi-  
 te Agni, Ap.*

*Nolite confor-  
 mari huic Se-  
 culo, Rom. 12.*

*Elementa calore  
solventur, 2 Pet.  
3. 10. Operis  
exurentur, ib.  
Quicquid dif-  
simulando pal-  
pamus, vindicta  
flamma combu-  
ret, Bern. Med.*

*Sed reformami-  
ni in novitate  
sensus verstri,  
Rom. cit.*

The World shall perish by fire, 2 Pet. 3. 10. That's its End ; And it will be the common Fate of all its Lovers, All shall be wrapt in the Deluge of those Flames, ib. Bern. Med. c. 2. So at our Utter Peril, we may not love this World ; but as the same Apostle adviseth, We must reform our Manners, by a Newness of our Senses, Rom. cit. This is the fundamental Maxim of the Morals of Jesus ; the first Rule of Christian Perfection ; the Propitious Star, by which our glorious Patriarch steer'd his Course to Heaven.

*Sensus & cogi-  
tatio humanae  
cordis in malum  
prona sunt ab  
adolescentia,  
Gen. 8. 21.*

*In omnes homi-  
nes mors per-  
transit, Rom.  
5. 12.*

10. 'Tis worth our observation, That from our Senses did arise our Ruine ; even at the Infancy of the World, their proneness to evil, caused Man's Apostacy from God ; a Cast of the Eye, a Touch of the Hand, a Taste of the Tongue, convey'd Sin to the Heart, Death to the Body, and Slavery to Adam's whole Posterity ; His poysond Senses infected Him, and all Us, Rom. 5. 12. As the Disease did, so the Cure must, begin there ; Our Senses therefore must be purifed, that our Spirits may be indued with sacred Notions, our Hearts filled with holy Affections, and our Souls may fly to God, and cleave to Him by a strict observance of his Will. We experience daily, That Creatures do imprint their Images in our Senses ; hence, by our Imagination,

gination, they are convey'd to our Understanding, then to our Wills ; which is easily seduced, the safeguard of Innocency being gone ; and thus, *The whole Wheel of Man's Nativity*, as S. James calls it, *Jac. 3. 6. Is set on flames with Concupiscence* ; especially now, that our inward desires, since Adams fall, are confederate with sinful Pleasures, and do greedily draw in their Figures, and thus defile themselves, and their operations ; the Royal Prophet, by a woful experience, complains of this easiness of the Senses beguiling his Will ; *They slip into the Affections of our Heart*, says he, *Psal. 72. 7.* Or as others read it, *Into the partnership of sin.*

*inflammat Ro-  
tam Nativita-  
tis, Jac. 3. 6.*

*transirent in af-  
fectionem cordis :  
Or, In similitu-  
dinem peccati,  
Psal. 72. 7.*

10. Thus, no wonder, if a Deluge of Sin gush into Man's Soul, and overturn all the strongest sentiments of Piety, while the Will holds Intelligence with those unfaithful Centenels, our Senses ; for which S. Austin bewails his own Misery, That even the Beauties of Creatures had deprived his Soul of her original Beauty, *Aug. Sol. c. 31.* What Cure for this Contagion ? While God sprinkles our Desires with the Dew of his Heavenly Grace, the Will must withdraw our Senses from cajouling Creatures abroad, and command Reason to busie it self on God and Virtue ; Thus holy Desires will

*Cecus & sur-  
dus, performosa-  
que fecisti, dif-  
formis irruer-  
bam Aug. Sol.  
c. 31. v. 13.*

*Nescitie, quia  
templum Di-  
eius, 1 Cor. 3.  
16.*

*Homo Vanitatis  
similis, Ps. 143.  
4.*

*Celum a spicis?  
celum ei. Aug.  
Tr. 2. Ep. 1. Jo.*

will create in the Mind Heavenly Images ; and Enammel it with the Sacred Characters of Grace and Perfection, fit to adorn God's Temples, such as All are, 1 Cor. 3. 16. For our thoughts suck in the Images of their Objects, and Transfigures the Soul into their likeness ; thereby, says the Royal Prophet, *Man becomes like his own Vanities*, Psal. 143. 4. Like to that he Loves. So S. Aug. observes, *Tract 2. in Epist. 1. Joan. Do you think of Heaven ? you become a Heavenly and Divine Creature* ; Such a Metamorphosis, Passion causeth in Man, That We become, *The thing we Love.*

11. Our great Patriarch, toucht with the Lights and Flames of Heaven, presently conceives Heavenly Desires ; Desires of copying in his Soul, the most Seraphical Perfections of God ; That God may enter into our Hearts, all vanity must be chaced out : To preserve his Mind from the Images of Sin, to evacuate unclean Concupiscence, to fit his Spirit for Divine Idea's, he flies from a deluding World, to Innocent Solitude ; He defies the Grandeur of his Ancestors, Honours, Wealth, Pleasures ; At once, for ever, with the most earnest Passions of his Soul, he abandons all for God ; he doth not by degrees file off the chains of Creatures, but

but at the first heat of Grace, he breaks all, thereby to conceal himself in a *Desart*, the Sanctuary of Innocency, the School of Contemplation, the Altar of *Divine Love*; In imitation of Jesus Christ, who there, *In three Battles*, Conquers and Triumphs over Satan; spends nights in Prayer, teaches his Apostles, feeds his Auditors, and discovers the Magnificence of his Glory, in the shew of his Transfiguration; Thither did God lead his Prophets, in the Old Law, to impart the Mysteries of its Figures; I will lead them into the Desart, saith God to Osea, there will I speak to their Hearts, Osea 2. 14. Thither did Jesus lead his Apostles, in the New, to disclose the Sacraments of his Truth, and Grace; I was ravish'd in Spirit, into the Desert, saith S. John in his Rev. 17. 3. Thence did the holy Spouse ascend, Flowing with her Perfumes and Spices, of Spiritual delights, leaning upon her Beloved, Cant. 8. 5. There also our Glorious Patriarch, freed from the clogs of seducing Creatures, surmounting the ambushes of charming Passions, and out of reach of the fiery Darts of Satan, by Contemplation, by Heavenly Desires, by Ecstasies of a Seraphick Love, fills his vast Soul with the Illustrious Images of Grace, and Holiness. For as S. Hierom speaks, Solitude is the Sanctuary of

Mat. 4. 1. Luc.

6. 12. Mat. 5. 1.

&amp; 14. 13. &amp;

17. 1.

*Ducam in solitudinem, loquar ad Cor. Of. 2.**Abstulit me in Spiritu in Desertum, Apoc.**17. 3. Ascendit de Deserto, deliciis affluens, immixa super dilectum, Cant. 8. 5.*

*Ibi mea oratio-holy Prayer, where, after many Tears and Sighs,  
nisi locus, & post  
realitas lacry-  
mas, post caro  
inherentes ocul-  
los, non nun-  
quam videbar  
interesse agminibus Angelorum.* Hier. Epist. ad Eustoch. de Virgin.

12. S. *Bennet* flies the rich and glorious Vanities of Creatures, that he may freely converse with God, enrich himself with Virtue, and accustom himself to the Innocent and Transcendent Operations of the Blessed Angels. He puts off the Livery of the Word, that he may put on the Image of *Jesus*, and he casts forth Earthly Concupiscences, that he may fill his Soul, with the true *Idea's* of Heaven, Grace and Glory ; that thus, without, within, and by all his Operations, he may be Transfigured into a supernatural Creature ; for Solitude is the Mistress of that Divine Art, saith S. *Bern.* Op.ii. c.9. whereby God is the whole Lesson we learn. And

*Divina Artis  
Magistra, quia  
Deus est Totum  
quod discitur,*  
*Bern. Opus.*  
11. cap. 9.  
*Una, placida &  
fida tranquilli-  
tas est, si quis  
ab inquietatis  
seculi turbini-  
bus extractus,  
Deo suo mente  
proximus, quic  
quid apud ce-  
teros in rebus  
humanius subli-  
me & magnum  
videtur, infra seam conscientiam jaceret gloriatur,* Cyp. Epist. ad Donat.

Him,

Him, with the Grandeur of his Birth, and the Train of his Noble Progenitors ? He hides himself from its Vanities, in the silent Retreats of an unfrequented Wilderness ; Doth *Satan* tempt him with an abundance of plenty and prosperity, in the flourishing Courts of Kings, and Princes ? He prefers the Treasures of Grace, and a quiet Conscience, to the pomp of Riches, flatterers and glittering Attendants ; Do his *Concupiscences* allure him with the Enchantments of Pastimes and sensual Pleasures ? Ah beloved Christians ! Here it is, that he discovers to this soft and delicate World, the stupendious power of *Grace*, in the magnanimous Champions of Evangelical Perfection ; Prayer, Watchings, Fastings, Hair-Cloths, Chains, Disciplines, are his usual Antidotes, against the charms of Sensuality ; To extinguish the heats of lustful desires, he rouls his Body in a Bed of Thorns and Bryars ; That with his streams of Blood, he may pour out the raging poyson of his brutish Passions ; that by a lingring Death for the defence of Virtue, he may become a Living Martyr ; And that being freed from the importune clamours ut spiritus of Flesh and Blood, he may sweetly enjoy God, and tranquille fructu- bearken to the delicious Whisperings of his Divino colloquio, cui para- Divine mente inkæret. Inspirations, as S. Aug. hath it, l. 2. Mor. Eccl. Aug. 1. 2. Mor. Eccles.

For then only it is, that we begin to relish the sweets of Spiritual Comforts, when sensual pleasures become loathsome and tedious.

13. Were not these most admirable Inventions of *Divine Love*, working in the Soul of our *Glorious Patriarch*? He abandons all the charming Impediments of Perfection, from Creatures *abroad*; He suppresses all the pleasant Incentives of Sin, from his *Concupiscences within* his own Breast; And bruiseth all the Fetters of Self-love, which usually clog the hearts of Mortals, in these their Earthly Tabernacles; to the End that his Soul recovering her Original Innocency, may fly more swiftly above the Sphear of Creatures, may fix her self more eagerly amidst the Choirs of admiring Angels; and by acts of a Pure, Seraphick, and Extatick Love, may drown her self more deeply, in the Sea of the *Divine Goodnes*s. So admirable, O *Iesu*, so admirable are the Combats, Victories, and Triumphs of the Saints! so rich are the spoils, which *Divine Love* wresteth from the conquered World; So glorious are the Trophies of the Saints; Thus vanquishing all the Arms of flattering Sensuality, and carrying *Heaven* by force of an Omnipotent and most Victorious Grace, working within Them.

14. The Holy Solitude of our great Saint, was that Sacred Womb, which gave Life to all his Prodigious Vertues, and to the wonders of God's Mercys ; *Here*, by a most rigorous Austerity, he Sequesters his Spirit, from all Commerce with Creatures and Passions, that he may soar up with the Wings of Contemplation, and **Heavenly** desires, into the Bosom of the Divinity, by a perfect Imitation, and Union with **Jesus** ; Witness his Prophetick Spirit, his **Heavenly** Raptures, and those Joys he feels from the Torrents of God's over-flowing sweetness ; even in this Life, he is inscrib'd, *A Citizen of Heaven*. *Here*, by Heroick Acts of sublime Perfection, he creates in his own Soul, a new Spiritual World, the Image of the Earthly Paradise ; wherein he restores the decayed state of Original Innocency ; Witness his Sacred Rule, full of Divine Oracles of a most sublime Sanctity ; His Miraculous Life, and the Attracts of his illustrious Examples ; For which he is deservedly Entitled, *The Star of the Desert*. *Here*, through an extream Zeal, of propagating the glory of God, by the Conversion of Sinners, he lays the Foundation of a new Order of Saints, of Earthly Angels, of a Heaven on Earth ; while by his stupendious Maxims of highest

highest Perfection, he draws tender and delicate Christians from their Perfumes and Pleasures ; the rich Gluttons, from their sumptuous Balls, and Banquets ; and the Grandees of this World, from their Purples, Crowns and Scepters ; Witness those Voluminous Catalogues of most Illustrious Kings, Queens and Nobles, even of this Your Sacred Majesties Kingdom, and Royal Ancestors, who inflam'd with the Love of Jesus by the Doctrine and Examples of the Disciples of our glorious Patriarch, have preferred his Solitudes, and Self-denials, to their own lofty Palaces, Plenty and Pleasures ; so truly is he styled, *The Father of Monastical Perfection*. Lastly it was in these Sacred Solitudes, wherein he proclaim'd an Eternal War, against the Power of Satan, while by himself, and his holy Troops of Religious Penitents, he purgeth the World from Idolatry, withdraws Criminals from their sinful state, and clears the Wildernesses of their Ancient Inhabitants, the Powers of Darkness ; and thus replenishes the *Kingdoms* of the Earth, with True Believers, God's living *Temples* with Holiness ; and *Heaven* with illustrious Bands of Glorious Citizens ; truly Dignified with the Magnificent Titles, of the *Conqueror of Devils, Champion of Saints, and the Restorer*

*Restorer of the Ruins of Angels*; So wonderful are the effects, which holy Solitude hath wrought in the Soul, and through the Sanctity, of our great Patriarch; that we have just reason to cry out with the great S. Basil; *O Sacred Desert, wherein the Triumpher of Devils, is become the Companion of Angels!* These be those Eminent Prerogatives of S. Bennet; purchased by the contempt of the glorious Vanities of this World, in his solitary and silent Retreats; and propagated by a delicious Gust of Heavenly Comforts, in his Sublime and Seraphick Contemplations; which is the second and last part of my Discourse, whereunto I crave the continuance of your favourable Attention.

15. The Soul being purified, in the Innocent Retirements of *Holy Solitude*, from Earthly Images, and Sensual Affections, slides gently, by *Contemplation* of God, and his holy Attributes, into a participation of the ineffable Joys of the Triumphant Saints; Oh! what Tongue, of Men or Angels, can explain the delight, she already enjoys, even in this her state of earthly Banishment? The Royal Prophet tells Us, That in his holy Extasies, he had a strong feeling of those Divine Comforts,

O Erimus, ubi  
Victor Demo-  
num, fit socius  
Angelorum!  
S. Basil. Ep. ad  
Greg. Naz.

Part II.

so much that he conceived himself already conversant with the blessed Spirits, *By a Communion in the Pleasures and their Happy state, in the Porches of the Heavenly Hierusalem*, Psal. 121. 1, and 2. For Contemplatives feel these ravishments, though not able to Utter, what they are ; They are *Mysteries of Grace, which may not be spoke of*, says one, experienced in these favours of Heaven, 2 Cor. 12. 4. He law, says Theodoret : *The Beauties of Paradice, and the Choirs of the rejoicing Saints, and heard the Harmonies of those Heavenly Musicians* ; but could give us no account of the Lustre of the One, or of the Sweetness of the Other ; *Non licet loqui* : It could not be done ; they are ineffable.

16. The charms of Sensual Delights, which so exceedingly Allure and Transport Man's Passions here, do evidently convince Us, that the Spiritual Joys of the great Servants of God, are of an Unexpressible power, to engage their Affections, when apprehended, valued and pursued, by the Lights of a pure Faith, and a Will freed from the Mists and Clogs of Sence, by refining and enflaming Grace. Our Great Saint, was perfectly acquainted with this Divine Art ; Contemplation of the Beauty of Virtue, and of the Glory of his Sovereign Good, had deeply

deeply printed in his heart, the Images of Heaven, of its Beauty and Harmony ; whereby he was already swallowed up in an Ocean of Divine Consolations, through an Excess of Spiritual Love ; or, (as S. Paul expresses this Transcendent happiness of the Saints,) *By an Excess of the Mind in God himself,* 2 Cor. 5, 13. That is, saith S. Augustin, by an Extatrick Love, *Whereby their Souls are Transported above all the Motions of Sensuality* ; as dead to all, Aug. in Psal. 103. *Excedimus omnia carnalia:*  
 Or yet higher, as S. Anselm observes, whereby *Their Mind attends only to the Illuminations of Faith, and motions of Grace :* Or as S. Denis yet *Intendimus ad superna.* Ansel.  
 advanceth these sublime Operations of their Seraphical Love, *By a perfect Transfiguration of their whole Selves, their Powers, and Motions, into the Will and Motion of the good God, they only, and wholly Love,* l. Divin. Nom. c. 4. These were the Operations, the Joys, the Excesses, of the great Soul of our Saint, in his Sacred Solitude ; *He raised himself above himself, by a generous contempt of the World, and by a most passionate love towards his glorious God.*

17. Every Peauty challenges some Love, and insensibly draws an Esteem and Veneration from us, as having in it, some Lineaments of that Beauty, which is Infinite and Eternal ;

therefore, the more excellent the Beauty is, the greater is the Admiration it forceth from Us. Nothing more excellent then God, in Majesty, Amiableness, and Bounty ; Therefore nothing more Valuable, nothing so Lovely, and Ravishing as God ; S. *Augustin* experienced this, when (freed from the slavery of his Concupiscences,) he began to have a relish of the spiritual Joys of the Saints ; and cries out, *Too late have I loved Thee, O Ancient, and never-fading Beauty, too late have I loved Thee ! Aug. Sol. c. 31. n. 4.*

c. 31. Should not this be our complaint too ? Have we not long enough worshipped sinful and perishing Beauties ? With what profit ? At least now let's return to God ; 'tis not possible, to consider the Beauty and Perfections of God, and not to be Enamour'd on his goodness ; so violent are the Attractives of his Loveliness, that contemplated in its self, none can be greater ; and if compar'd with all the most passionate Charms

*Lux ista, comparatione illius summa Lux, compared with the Eternal, are Darkness, saith nou est Lux di- cenda, sed Nox.*  
S. Aug. Med. cap. 27. n. 5. If the visible Beau-  
ty of the Transfigured Humanity of Jesus, so  
far transported the admiring Apostles, in the  
Solitude of Mount Thabor, as to make them for-  
get all things of this World ; Much rather, had they

they been admitted to the Contemplation of his hidden Divinity ; especially, if with our *Holy Patriarch*, we duly ponder the inestimable Price which *Jesus* paid, the Indignities he suffer'd, the streams of Blood, the Sighs and Tears it cost *Jesus*, whereby to purchase for Us, this incomparable Happiness : Ah *Beloved Christians* ! What should we not do ? What should we not suffer ? That we may be admitted to enjoy a full Taste of the Torrent of Divine Joys, at the Fountain Head, whose Streams are delicious !

18. But Unhappy Man, as a Child of the Earthly *Adam*, is perpetually hurried on, with the Allurements of Sensual Delights, which are offered by his Senses, ; whereas he is insensible to all the Charms of Heavenly Beauty and Comforts, presented to his View, by obscure Faith ; so wretchedly blind and inconsiderate, is corrupted Nature : But our great *Saint*, touch'd with the Sacred Lights and Flames of Grace, corrects these fatal Disorders of his seduced Will ; Contemplating Creatures in their greatest Pomp and Glory, he discovers their Vanity, and despises them ; Then soaring up to Heaven by Meditation on the Divine Perfections, and their Overflowings , his Spirit is

Transported to a Gust of the Joys of the Heav-  
enly Paradice.

19. Mystical Divines expound this Extatic Joy *Two ways*; *First*, by Mediation of Supernatural Lights, ushering in, Love, and Delights; *Or, Secondly*, by immediate irradiation of Divinely melting Flames, in the superior Region of the Soul; not otherwise penetrating the Nature, Cause, or Vigour of those Ravishments, she feels; such is the activity, swiftness and penetration of Divine Love, and of the Gusts of Glory, in Contemplative, and Heaven-aspiring Souls; whereof our *Holy Patriarch*, in his Sacred Solitude, had a most ample experience, in his frequent Ravishments; In which, as S. *Gregory Reports*, *The Supernatural workings of his Soul*, were so much the more pure and penetrating, by how much the more fervently, he sequestred his Spirit from Earthly Images, and private Affections. Sometimes he is prevented with Divine Lights, whereby he beholds the Majesty of God, the streamings of his Grace, the Beauty of Paradice, the Order, Harmony, and Odours of the Saints; whence he gusheth forth, into breathings of Love and Desires; which are return'd with Illapses of delicious Perfumes; though not yet admitted to the state.

*Ædificat soli-  
tudinem, in qua;  
tanto purius  
Deum videt,  
quanto solitari-  
us reperit.  
S. Greg. vit.  
S. Ben.*

state of Eternizing Glory: The Royal Prophet gives some light, whereby we may conceive some Figure, of these ineffable Pastimes of God's special Favourites; *In the Voice of Exaltation, there is a sound of feasting, Psal. 41. 5.* The melody of those within, at the Banquet, is heard by those abroad, saith S. Aug. ib. Christ likens the felicity of the Saints to a Marriage Feast, *Matt. 22. 2.* Here the Guests feast in the noblest Rooms, whilst their Mirth and Musick is heard abroad. Thus the Glorious Saints feast in God's Heavenly Glory, at the Espousals of the Lamb, amidst the ravishing Harmonies of the Celestial Choirs, whose delicious Echo's re-found in the Souls of the Saints on Earth, while they soar up to God, by Contemplation of his Glory, Love of his Beauty, and a languishing to be freed from this Earthly banishment, and to be inseparably united with Jesus; *This is that transporting Harmony, which sounds below, from the Eternal Banquets of the Saints above:* says S. Aug. cit. But sometimes too, without any perceptible thought of those Divine Beauties, his Soul accustom'd to Supernatural flights, by illapses of holy desires, is sweetly and swiftly carried above the Sphear of Creatures, ravished forth it self; and being swallowed up in

*In voce Exultationis—sonus Epulantis,  
Psal. 41. 5.  
Sonus extra, in-  
tus celebrantis  
festivitatem,  
Aug. ib.  
Simile est reg-  
num celorum  
boni Regi,  
qui fecit Nup-  
tias filio suo,  
Matth. 22. 2.*

*De eterna ille-  
festivitate so-  
nat. Aug. Sup..*

in the Ocean of the Divinity, is replenished, with a Gust of the Joys, Odours, and Harmonies of the Ever Blessed Spirits ; As S. Paul, in

*Sive in corpore,*  
*sive extra cor-*  
*pus nescio; Deus*  
*scit. 2 Cor. 12.* *a stupendious Transport of Love and Felicity, he*  
*knew not, 2 Cor 12.2.* Thus do the Saints, even

*Participatio eius*  
*in id ipsum,*  
*Psal. 121. 3.* which the Royal Prophet explains, by a participation of the same thing in substance, though not in the same manner, *Psal. 121: 2.* Which Philo calls, *A Joy of the Glory, before its Possession.* So that methinks I behold our glorious Patriarch, by his penitential Solitude, and Heavenly Desires, now absolutely exempted from all Vices, and replenisht with all Virtues; Cloath'd

*Duo Monachi*  
*euntem in ca-*  
*lum viderunt,*  
*ornatum pallio*  
*preciosissimo,*  
*circum fulgen-*  
*tibus lampadi-*  
*bis.* Greg.  
Vit. S. Bened. Brightness ; (soaring up upon the Wings of Seraphims, as S. Gregory seems to describe him ; whilst Jesus, full of Majesty, and environ'd with Legions of his Heavenly Courtiers, In his Left Hand, presents him with inestimable Riches and Glory ; and in his Right Hand, with an Eternity of Delights and Ravishments ; as Salomon figures

*In sinistra, di-*  
*vitiae & gloria,*  
*in dextra, lon-*  
*gitudo dierum.*  
Prov. 3. 16. the

the welcom of the Saints, into the Kingdom of Glory, *Prov. 3, 16.* Thus did our great Saint ascend as the Bride from the Wilderness, *Cant. 3. 6.* by Divine Contemplation, over-flowing with unexpressible Brightness, Odour and Comforts ; as the delicious Fruits and Recompence of the contempt of Worldly Vanity, Mortification, and Prayer ; and as my Text minds Us, *He shall sit solitary, and be silent, because he hath raised Himself above Himself.*

*Ascendit per  
desertum, deli-  
ciss affluens.  
Cant. 3. 6.*

20. If the lives of the Saints be Exhortations and Allurements to Sanctity ; because we ought to Imitate, what we delight to think of ; as S. Aug. tells Us, *Serm. 47. de Sanct.* we ought in some measure, to square our Lives, by the Maxims and Examples of this great Saint : If we thus fly from the sinful Use of Creatures, practice Christian Virtues, and by Prayer Converse with God, we shall feel our Hearts cleared from the Images of Vanity, and Sensual Delights, our affections un-chain'd from Worldly Interests, and our Spirits fasten'd to God, the attractive Centre of all our desires, Oh ! Beloved Christians, that we all would oft, from amidst our Earthly and Innocent Concerns, sally into the Blessed Regions of the Saints ; and as S. Bernard adviseth Us, *Sigh*

*Solemnitates  
Martyrum ex-  
hortationes sunt  
Maioriorum, ut  
imitari non pi-  
geat, quod cele-  
brare delectat.  
Aug. Serm. 47.  
de Sanct.*

*Si patimur in  
terra, ad celum  
suspireremus. Ber.*

*to Heaven, while we suffer on Earth.* Though here we be in a state of Banishment ; and as Captives, fetter'd with many Chains of Cares and Contradictions, until our Sins be fully expiated ; yet ought We, even from these our Prisons, to sigh after the Liberty of God's Children, to shake off all the importuning Impediments of Sanctifying and Transfiguring Grace, and to send before Us, Trains of Enflamed Desires, as the Ambassadors of our Souls, who may frequently offer up our holy Vows and Petitions, to our Heavenly Spouse ;

*Amore languo.* Cant. 2. 5. and assure him, that *We languish with Love,*

*Cant. 2. 7.* We have oft seen a small and slender Vapour rising from a Lake, by the attractive heat of the Sun, which purifying it from its Earthly dregs, prints on it its own Image, and almost converts it into its own Luminous Substance. Thus our *Spiritual Sun*, the Glorious *Jesus*, draws Souls forth the Puddles of Earthly Concupiscences, purgeth their Affections from sinful Allurements, Beautifies them with the Sacred Images of his Divine Perfections, and changeth them into Supernatural, and Angelical Creatures. Oh ! That we all, fed with the Lights of Gods revealed Maxims of Christian, and Evangelical Perfection, and en-

enflamed with the Love of the Eternal Beauties, would fly in Spirit into the Innocent Solitudes of the Saints, View their Combats, and Conquests; and Emulate their Crowns and Trophies. At least permit your Hearts to become the Solitude of Jesus, that, in his View, ye may weep over your Sins, bemoan your Banishment, soar up by holy Vows, and cast your selves into the Seas of his Divine Comforts; That ye may cry out with the great S. Hier.

*O how sweet and fragrant are the Flowers of the Heavenly Paradice!* Then, as the Holy Prophet reports, from his own Experience, Your hearts shall overflow, shall wonder, and shall be dilated, Isa. 60. 5. And as the Seraphical St. Bon. explains it: *Ye shall overflow with pleasures, in the full View of Jesus in all his Glory; ye shall wonder at the plenty of your own happy and contented state; and ye shall be dilated with an unexpressible Joy, at the presence of all those Blessed Legions of Glorious Saints and Angels.* So that if we follow the Examples of this Illustrious Lamp of Divine Vertues, we shall enjoy, *Here, That Peace which no Tongue can Utter; and Hereafter, we shall posses that Joy, and Fullness of Glory, which the most Ambitious thoughts of Man can never fathom,*

*O Deseruum,  
floribus Christi  
sui vernans!*  
Hier. Epist. ad  
Heliodor.

*Afflues, mirabilis  
mirus, dilata-  
bitur cor. II.*

*60. 5.*

*Afflues deliciarum  
Divina Contemplan-  
tione, miraberis in plen-  
nitudine tua  
felicitatis, di-  
lataberis in com-  
prehensione  
beatae societatis.*

*Bon. Sol. 1. 4.*

which God only can give ; and which I beseech God, mercifully to shower down, upon Your most Sacred Majesties, this Honourable Assembly, and all Christian People ; *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Amen.

---

**F I N I S.**

---

